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FOREIGN NOTES

ENGLISH AT OXFORD

The Educational Times, (London.) Jan. 1895

The regulations for the new school at Oxford are now published. The Board of Studies has drawn up a syllabus which seems respectable as far as the English language is concerned, while it bears witness to the justice of our remarks as to the difficulty in examining in English literature. If a striking illustration is wanted of the folly of coupling together language and literature, philology and æsthetics, it may be found easily enough from the list furnished by the Board. A student may take his choice, it seems, between Icelandic *or* Wordsworth and his contemporaries, 1797-1850; the Comptus of Phillippe de Thaun *or* the history of Scottish poetry; Old English language and literature down to 1150 A. D. *or* German literature from 1500 to the death of Goethe, in its bearing on English literature. This is not a joke; men will be seriously classified in comparison with one another on the same lists as having taken the same examination when they will have specialized on totally different subjects, and been marked by different examiners, each with his own standard. It would be as sensible to make one big class-list of the Classical and Mathematical Schools, and a good deal more sensible to run classics and English literature together.

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This, it may be said, is a minor matter. But it is not a trifle, because in practice posts are given largely on the strength of the class-lists, and it will not be good for the study of literature if a man who got his First for his intimate acquaintance with Nicole Bozon or the Gunlaugssaga should be allowed to discourse on Shakespeare at a provincial University college in preference to a man who got a Second by endeavouring to make himself thoroughly familiar with Elizabethan literature. However, nine out of eleven papers set will be common to all candidates, and it is, perhaps, from them that the whole nature of the school may best be judged. Of these nine, one deals with set books in Old English, two with selected Middle English authors and set portions of Chaucer and Langland, one with the history of the language, and one with Gothic, &c. There will be no difficulty in examining here fairly enough, and little need or chance to attempt to touch "literature" in these four papers. Language, archæology, and history will mainly occupy the candidate and examiner here, even if the half paper devoted to Chaucer. So far this is all right; but why call it "literature"?

LONDON SCHOOL CHILDREN

The Journal of Education, (London,) Jan. 1895

The London School Board has had a return compiled showing what had become of the 61,000 boys and 50,000 girls who had recently left its schools. Deducting those who have simply removed or gone to other schools, there

are some 29,000 boys and 26,000 girls to be accounted for. The report is worth all the pains spent upon it, if it did nothing more than belie the contention of the enemies of popular education, that schooling makes boys anxious to be clerks, and girls unwilling to be servants. Of the 29,000 boys, only 547 have gone to "that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood"; while, of the 26,000 girls, 4,214 have gone to service. The most unsatisfactory feature is the very large number of boys who have gone to swell the ranks of unskilled labour—errand boys and messengers, 6,700. Of apprenticeship to trades, there is hardly a trace, for, of the 245 described as bootmakers, a good many are doubtless only shop-boys; and, of the 635 described as printers most are probably only machine-tenders. "At home" there are 1,505 boys, and 8,437 girls. The list shows 388 news-boys, 522 shop-boys, 306 telegraph-boys, 363 van-boys, 1,081 dress-makers, 156 milliners, and 68 girls Civil-servants.

EDUCATION AND CRIME

The Schoolmaster, Oct. 20, 1894

The effects of our educational system upon crime has been a favorite topic for public discussion during the past few weeks, and we note that Sir John Lubbock, Sir Henry James, and Mr. Diggle, amongst many others, have taken the line prominently indicated in this journal on 8th September. Speaking at Bury last week, Sir Henry James said "he recollected in his early professional life, when he attended the criminal courts of this country, that when one took up the record of the criminals awaiting trial he found that the greater portion of them could neither read nor write. If they took up such a calendar at the present time they would find that happily it was but half the length of the calendar of former days, and year by year progress was going on to such an extent that the criminals now who could neither read nor write were becoming fewer and fewer, and, of course, as they got rid of all this ignorance the country gained, not only in knowledge but in virtue."

THE ELDERLY ASSISTANT MASTER

The Educational Times, Dec. 1, 1894

Apropos of Eton, a writer in *Blackwood*, who gives a very interesting and sympathetic account of the Rev. Edward Hale, utters a plea for the elderly assistant-master, who has such a hard time of it nowadays to hold his own against *les jeunes*:—

"The young ones push out the elder men, by nature in many cases, but sometimes with the vehemence of a principle, which thinks of nothing but the additional keenness as an implement of the recently sharpened and polished weapon. It is a great mistake in many ways, in none more than in the world of education. The experience, the composure, even, if we may so call it, the comparative indifference of age, is a great addition, and one that can least of all be dispensed with in a public school. The matured mind, which is beyond the starts of panic, and knows by experience how much more to be trusted is the even tenor of the general than the occasional disturbances of boyish extravagance, or the bad moments that sometimes occur in the

management of a surging, seething world of humanity, even in childhood, is an almost fatal loss to any kind of government. A public school, above all wants that steady element. No young man could have held the place which Mr. Hale did in Eton: nothing but a great tree, nourished by many snows and summers, can give such strong support or cast such grateful shade."

If this may be said with truth of old men, with how much more force may it be applied to elderly women! But this view is not popular in the High Schools.

GERMAN SCHOOL LIFE

The Journal of Education, (London) Jan., 1895

The social element in school life, receives, perhaps, too little notice. It appears under widely varying forms in different lands. A German *Gymnasiallehrer* would, we fear, be somewhat puzzled by a house-supper at a public school; and many English schoolmasters would, we are sure, be horrified by an *Abiturienter Kneipe*. Neither is very injurious to morality. In Germany, girls, too, have their harmless festivities. Let us, for instance, tell how they commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of a private school at Barth. Full of excitement, all rose early. At eight o'clock there was a religious service, with an address by the headmistress, based on a suitable text. At eleven began the public ceremony, to which a host of parents and friends had been invited. First came the prologue, delivered by a teacher. It referred to the foundress of the school, "die mit dem Blick des Falken hell und weit den ersten Stein gefügt zu diesem Bau." If the lady in question was not satisfied with metaphor like that, she must be hard to please. Her successor is described as casting shadows like a green bay-tree, and calling the children to shelter beneath her foliage. Surely this, again, is handsome enough. After a compliment to the present headmistress, began the *Festspiel*. "The Spirits of the School," represented by the pupils of the establishment. With song and declamation the spirits appear. It is rather a shock to learn their names, which are: Religion, German, History, English, French, Arithmetic, Geography, Writing, and Handwork—as prosaic a lot of spirits as we ever encountered. All stood under the protection of Queen Luise—"in der wir höchste Weiblichkeit verehern"; they were distinguished by appropriate dresses and emblems, and, taken together, presented a most charming picture. The *Festspiel* closed with the Psalm "Herr, deine Güte reicht so weit die Wolken geh'n." More compliments and votes of thanks, refreshments, and the end. Nor do we doubt that genuine pleasure was derived from what may seem to us a somewhat medley programme.